Little Red Riding Hood
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# Notes and Queries

[The editors will welcome as contributions to this section of the *California Folklore Quarterly* either small items of traditional materials or inquiries designed to elicit information about such materials. In general, discussion of the materials here offered will be brief. Records of facts likely to be lost or overlooked, and inquiries which our readers may be able to answer—such items will be the typical ones.]

*The Oracular Mirror.*—A notation in a seventeenth-century book recalls a Mexican superstition which had many parallels in other parts of the world. The magic mirror which foretells the future is no novelty, and mirror-gazing persisted even in Christian countries until comparatively late times. The subject interested Erasmus Francisci, an assiduous gatherer of all sorts of lore. In his discussion about oracles in general, he describes a Mexican mirror idol. "In the public library in the city of Nürnberg is a little Mexican idol of metal which has a toad's or rather a monkey's face, as well as such a tail as this animal has. It has pearls in its ears, and at its throat, there is a precious red stone. In the back is a mirror into which those seeking advice are reported to have looked." (*Acerra Exoticorum,* Frankfort, 1672, p. 594.) Either faces or objects became visible in such mirrors. For example, the appearance of a white flower was a token of good luck. A misting or a clouding of the mirror was a bad sign. It would be interesting to know whether the tradition persists today in the by-ways of Mexico, and whether old mirror idols are still in use. After all, to the casual observer they might be just what they seem to be, a mirror.

*Berkeley, California* C. Grant Loomis

*Little Red Riding Hood.*—I remember my mother and grandmother telling me a version differing slightly from any that I have found in print. I always thought that Little Red Riding Hood should end "our way" and that everyone else just did not know the story. As my grandmother told it, Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother jumped out of bed and locked herself in the closet when the wolf came into the cottage. As the wolf was about to eat the little girl, her grandmother warned her from the closet so that she escaped. She called a woodchopper from the forest. Soon the wolf was lying on the ground with his head cut off. Then the grandmother came out of the closet and they had a feast. This version is ultimately of New England origin.

*Berkeley, California* Archer Taylor



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